

2014-15 VASS Legislative Positions

1. Budget and Funding

- i. VASS supports the full funding of all mandates passed by the General Assembly. The partial funding or absence of funding for these mandates results in an added burden on local school budgets.
 - See attached unfunded mandate information
- ii. VASS supports the removal of the SOQ Support Position Cap to more accurately reflect current practice in local school divisions. The Cap on state funding for support positions was put into place as a temporary reduction during the recession. This reduction has been made permanent in successive budgets since that time.
 - What positions have been eliminated due to this cap and how has that impacted the classroom?
- iii. VASS supports a review and update of the SOQ funding formula to ensure that it reflects the actual costs and needs of providing quality education. This includes meeting the increased SOL and SOA requirements set by the State Board of Education.
 - Calculate how many positions are provided through local funds in excess of the SOQ in order to meet the more stringent SOA and SOL requirements.
 - What positions have been eliminated since 2008? The VDOE estimates that there are 5,000 fewer positions.
- iv. VASS supports a revision of the Virginia Preschool Initiative funding formula to provide for the actual cost of providing preschool services

2. Assessments and Accountability

- i. VASS supports replacing the A-F report card by working with the Board of Education and the SOL Innovation Committee to redesign the existing State Report Card so that it is more effective in communicating to parents and the public about the status and achievements of Virginia's public schools without the use of letter grades
- ii. VASS supports the work of the SOL Innovation Committee in identifying and implemented a revised balanced assessment model which could include the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests; College and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA); student portfolios; problem-based projects; collaborative presentations; and community review of student projects/research studies. (taken from the current draft of the Blueprint)
- iii. VASS supports expanded flexibility with the timing of administration of Standards of Learning tests to document more fully the period in which students have mastered "competency-based" learning standards and are able to accelerate into higher levels of content. (taken from the current draft of the Blueprint)
- iv. VASS supports the use of mobile technology devices for SOL testing.
- v. VASS supports allowing expedited retakes of all or parts of SOL assessments for all students. These retakes should follow the same guidelines as established for retakes at the secondary level. Success on the retake should be counted in the accreditation calculation for the year in which the student takes the retake.